Sam LeFlore- Soccer States Article

The game was played at WakeMed Soccer Park in Carry, North Carolina.

The Cougars suffered a sad defeat in the state finals on November 19 ending the team’s twenty game winning streak. The team lost to Raleigh Cardinal Gibbons 3-1.

The Cougars were able to get on the board first with a goal by Chris Gorospe assisted by Roland Minogue in the twelfth minute. Although the Cougars got on the board first, they were unable to keep the magic going.

Less than a minute later, Chase Rhode answered back with a goal for Cardinal Gibbons to tie the game. Cardinal Gibbons scored again in the thirty-third minute with an unassisted goal by Ade Taiwo, which gave Gibbons the 2-1 advantage at half time.

“The final result of the game was decided in the first 10 minutes of the second half,” said Catholic coach Oscar Del Pino.

Taiwo was able to score another goal in the fifty-fifth minute assisted by Dom Finnelli. Ade Taiwo was awarded MVP of the state championship game, he score a total of 18 goals all season. The Crusaders have made it to 6 state championships in the past 7 years, recording 4 wins in all.

Gibbons had a 7-3 advantage on shots on goal and recorded six corner kicks while the Cougars only recorded four.

“Our expectations every game are to work hard and combine. We didn’t change anything for this game,” said junior Justen Shear.

The Cougars had just come off a 5-2 win against Asheville High the previous week and were extremely anxious to play the Crusaders. The Cougars had faced the Crusaders last year in the championship.

This game was the Cougars sixteenth appearance in the NCHSSA men’s soccer finals with seven previous titles. Their most previous championship being in 2008. The team ended the season with a 22-4 record.

“I think that the team did well, we played hard and like it was our last game,” said Shear.

“We beat Gibbons once already this year, so we knew it was going to be a good game.”

The Cougars faced the Crusaders earlier in October with a different outcome; the final score was 2-1 in favor of the Cougars.

I think Oscar is an inspiring coach, he always knows what to say at the right moments and is very into the games,” said Shear.